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ABSTRACT

Whether intuitive abilities can be improved through purposeful training for a more holistic approach to education was the object of this study. It was hypothesized that individuals participating in a mental training program designed to improve right-brain intuitive abilities would show significant improvement in such abilities, while a control group not experiencing the training would show no such improvement. The experimental group of 30 college students participated in a 30-hour course designed to improve intuitive abilities based on the J. Silva mental training method (1977), using systematic relaxation cycles, imagery, and visualization. The control group of 30 college students received no such training. The HCP-Profile Test, a measure of right or left brain orientation; the HCP-PSI test, a measure of attitude toward intuition; and the Intuitive Potentials Test, a test of intuitive potential, were administered to the subjects. Pre- and posttests wer conducted for each group. Although there were no differences between subjects and comparisons on pretest measures, posttesting indicated significant increased scores toward greater intuition for the experimental group on each of the three measures. The training was most helpful for those who were predominantly left-brain, or logic, oriented or who were balanced in abilities. Results show that an appropriately designed training program can improve intuitive abilities. Four tables and three figures present study data. (SLD)

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Improving Intuitive Abilities for a More Wholistic Approach to Education

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Improving Intuitive Abilities for a More Wholistic Approach to Education

The objective of this study was to determine if intuitive abilities can be improved through purposeful training for a more wholistic approach to education.

The study's hypothesis was that individuals participating in a mental training program designed to improve right-brain intuitive abilities will show significant improvement in such abilities as measured by the HCP Profile test, HCP-PSI test and the Intuitive Potentials test, while a control group not experiencing the training will show no such improvement.

Theoretical Framework

A wholistic approach to education requires that we pay more attention to the right-brain hemisphere and the intuitive approaches to teaching, learning and information processing. While there are few studies of intuition, most authors who are willing to consider the intuitive mode of thinking-learning agree that we should not continue to ignore the intuitive capabilities if we are interested in developing human potential. We need to develop strategies that incorporate more of the total capacity of the brain in the learning process (Render, 1987).

Studies of creative people indicate that both their right and left hemispheres seem to be integrated, balanced and used more equally (Samples, 1976). Hanson (1982) surveyed 176 gifted and 134 normally distributed third, fourth, and fifth graders to determine if gifted students tended to be the more intuitive of the two groups. Intuitive functioning was predominant for 69.5% of the gifted students and 39% of the normally distributed students. A similar finding was suggested by Clinchy (1975) in a survey of third, fourth and fifth graders in which gifted students were predominantly intuitors.

If intuition is useful for creativity and success, how can we better train teachers and students to more fully utilize their intuitive abilities? Is it possible to develop a training program that will improve intuitive abilities? Ostrander and Schroder (1979) suggest that such a training program should include relaxation of the body and mind, encouraging an attitude of openness and developing game strategies that involve guessing.

Method

Procedure

The current study was an attempt to determine if a training program could be utilized to show a definite improvement in intuitive abilities. Two groups of subjects participated in the study. The experimental group (30 college students) participated in a 30 hour course designed to expand right-brain intuitive abilities. The course was based on the Silva mental training method (Silva & Miele, 1977). This method

was developed fifteen years ago and has been used with people of varying backgrounds, including children as young as eight years old. The Silva method orients the learner toward subjective, expanded awareness through an experiential framework that includes systematic relaxation cycles, use of imagery and visualization. The training promotes a mix of hightened sensory awareness against a background of deep relaxation which allows individuals to be sensitive to intuitive, right-brain oriented, information processing channels operative at the alpha level of awareness. The alpha brain wave level is characteristic of electrical brain wave activity during deep relaxation (Angell & Desau, 1977).

The benefits and practical uses of right-brain thinking were presented and discussed during the experimental subjects' training. Initial training included a series of exercises designed to promote functioning in a relaxed alpha level of consciousness. Additional training exercises included suggestions on improving mental relaxation, visualization, imagination and intuitively sensing information. Each exercise included suggestions for mental relaxation, beneficial affirmations, guided imagery and the impression of new material for that session. Towards the end of the course subjects were given practice in using their intuitive abilities to sense new information. The control group (30 subjects) were members of a regular college class that did not receive the intuition training. Pre and posttests were provided to both groups.

Date Sources

Three instruments were used in the pre and posttesting of both groups. (1) The HCP Profile test was developed for use in the Institute for Futures Forecasting research (Loye, 1984). This is a simple questionnaire to determine left- verses right-brain dominance. (2) The HCP-PSI test is a short questionnaire to determine beliefs and experiences about intuition (Loye, 1984). (3) The Intuitive Potentials test is a questionnaire developed by this researcher to determine the extent to which potential intuitive abilities currently existed for each subject.

Results

Table one presents pre and posttest data for the experimental and control groups on the three tests. T-tests showed no significant pretest differences between the experimental and control groups on any of the three measures. However, significant differences were found between the group means on all three posttest measures, with the experimental group showing increased scores toward greater intuition (see Figure 1). Subjects receiving the right-brain oriented training improved their intuition scores on each of the three measures. It was found that differences between males and females on the three measures were not significant.

The HCP Profile test classifies individuals as predominantly right-brain oriented (intuitive) or left-brain oriented (logical). In both the experimental and control groups fourteen individuals were classified as predominantly right-brain oriented, nine were left-brain oriented and seven were classified as balanced.

Individuals were separated into and right- and left-brain oriented groups on the basis of HCP Profile test scores for further analysis. There were significant differences between left- and right-brain oriented individuals in the experimental group on the HCP-PSI pretest and the Intuitive Potentials pretest as shown by table two. Thus there were preexisting differences between left- and right-brain orinted individuals in their beliefs about intuition and their perceived intuitive abilities.

Table three shows that for the right-brain (intuitive) oriented individuals there were no significant differences in gain scores between experimental and control groups on any of the three measures. For the left-brain (logic) oriented individuals there were significant gains for experimental group subjects on the HCP Profile and Intuitive Potentials measures but not on the HCP-PSI measure (see Figure 2). This indicated that the training program may have been of benefit to the left-brain or logic oriented individuals in helping them become more right-brain oriented or balanced in their abilities. However, the training did not affect their beliefs in intuition as measured by the HCP-PSI test.

Intercorrelation of gain scores for the experimental group showed a moderate relationship between gains on the three measures (HCP Profile & HCP-PSI =.42 p=.002, HCP Profile & Intuitive Potentials =.50 p<.001, HCP-PSI & Intuitive Potentials =.46 p=.001).

For further analysis, individuals in the experimental group that were shown to be balanced in brain functioning on the HCP Profile pretest measure were combined with left-brain oriented individuals into one group and were compared with the right-brain or more intuitive group. T-tests showed significant differences between right-brain oriented individuals and all others (balanced and left brain oriented individuals) on the Intuitive Potentials test with the latter group making greater gains (see Table 4 & Figure 3). While there were not significant differences between right-brain oriented individuals and the others on the Intuitive Potentials test, most of the right brain oriented individuals made fewer gains than the others on this measure.

There were also significant differences between right-brain oriented individuals and all others (balanced and left-brain oriented) on the HCP Profile test with the latter group making greater gains. This indicated that the training program was also of benefit to those individuals who showed balanced right- and left-brain abilities (as well as of benefit to left-brain oriented individuals). These individuals became more right-brain or intuitively oriented as a result of the training.

Of the 30 experimental group subjects, 21 showed gains on the HCP Profile test (70%), 22 improved on the HCP-PSI test (73%) and 19 improved on the Intuitive Potentials test (63%). Of the 14 experimental group individuals who were classified as right-brain oriented (intuitive) at the start of the study, 6 showed gains on HCP Profile test (43%), 9 on the HCP-PSI test (64%) and 5 on the Intuitive Potentials test (36%). Of the 9

experimental group individuals who were classified as left-brain oriented (logical) at the start of the study, 9 showed gains on the HCP Profile (100%), 7 improved on HPC-PSI (78%) and 8 gained on the Intuitive Potentials instrument (89%).

Discussion

Individuals participating in the Silva Mental Training program showed a significant improvement in intuitive abilities as shown by the three measures in this study. Subjects receiving the training showed increased scores on the HCP Profile indicating they tended to become more right-brain oriented (intuitive) as a result of the training. Scores also changed significantly on the HCP-PSI test indicating their beliefs and experiences became more positive toward intuitive thinking. Scores improved on the Intuitive Potentials Test indicating their potential for intuitive thinking increased. The control group subjects' scores on all three measures showed no significant change.

Those individuals who were classified as predominantly right-brain or intuitively oriented on the HCP test to start with showed small but insignificant gains in intuition. The individuals who were classified either as balanced, or left-brain (logic) oriented, showed greater gains in intuition on all the measures, with the gain being statistically significant on the HCP Profile and Intuitive Potentials measures. This indicated that the Silva Mental Training program was most helpful for those individuals who were predominantly left-brain or logic oriented or who were balanced in their abilities. The training enabled these individuals to become more intuitively oriented.

The present study shows that an appropriately designed training program can improve intuitive abilities. Since studies have shown that gifted students and highly successful people use more intuitive abilities than others, many people are urging that the school curriculum develop a more wholistic approach. Studies such as the present one can add weight to this argument by showing that mental training programs do exist that will show results. Right-brain intuitive abilities can be improved, leading to a more balanced and wholistic education.

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Table 1

Scores and Differences for Experimental and Control Groups Before and After Silva Mental Training Program

Test/group	Pretest		Posttest		Change	t	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
HCP Profile							
Exp.	15.50	2.79	16.73	2.38	1.23	2.39	.020
Cont.	15.10	2.33	15.20	2.58	0.10		
HCP-PSI							
Exp.	11.27	3.29	9.63	2.46	-1.64	2.29	.026
Cont.	11.47	2.36	11.07	2.39	-0.40		
Intuitive Potentials							
Exp.	15.80	2.67	17.37	1.61	1.57	4.15	.000
Cont.	15.20	1.90	15.10	2.52	-0.10		

n=30 both groups

Table 2

Pretest Scores for Left- and Right-Brain Oriented Individuals Within Experimental Group

Test/group	M	SD	t	p
HCP-PSI				
Right-Brain	10.29	2.84	2.93	.008
Left-Brain	13.44	2.30		
Intuitive Potentials				
Right-Brain	16.97	2.16	2.18	.049
Left-Brain	14.11	3.26		

n=14 right brain and 9 left brain oriented

Table 3

Pre- to Posttest Gain Scores for Left- and Right-Brain Oriented Individuals in Experimental and Control Groups

Test/group	M	SD	t	p
Right-Brain				
HCP Profile				
Exp.	0.93	1.00	1.12	.27
Cont.	0.57	0.65		
HCP-PSI				
Exp.	1.29	1.77	1.60	.13
Cont.	0.43	0.94		
Intuitive Potentials				
Exp.	0.86	1.51	1.23	.23
Cont.	0.21	1.25		
Left-Brain				
HCP Profile				
Exp.	3.11	1.62	4.00	.002
Cont.	0.67	0.87		
HCP-PSI				
Exp.	1.89	2.09	1.05	.32
Cont.	1.11	0.78		
Intuitive Potentials				
Exp.	2.22	1.64	3.79	.002
Cont.	0.89	1.83		

Table 4

Pre to Posttest Gain Scores for Right-Brain Oriented Individuals and All Others (Balanced and Left-Brain) in Experimental Group

Test/group	M	SD	t	p
HCP Profile				
Right-Brain	0.71	0.99	3.86	.001
Others	2.63	1.67		
Intuitive Potentials				
Right-Brain	0.93	1.44	2.66	.01
Others	2.44	1.67		
HCP-PSI				
Right-Brain	1.43	1.65	1.25	.22
Others	2.19	1.68		

n=14 right brain and 16 others

Figure 1

Pre to Posttest Gain Scores
for Experimental and Control Groups

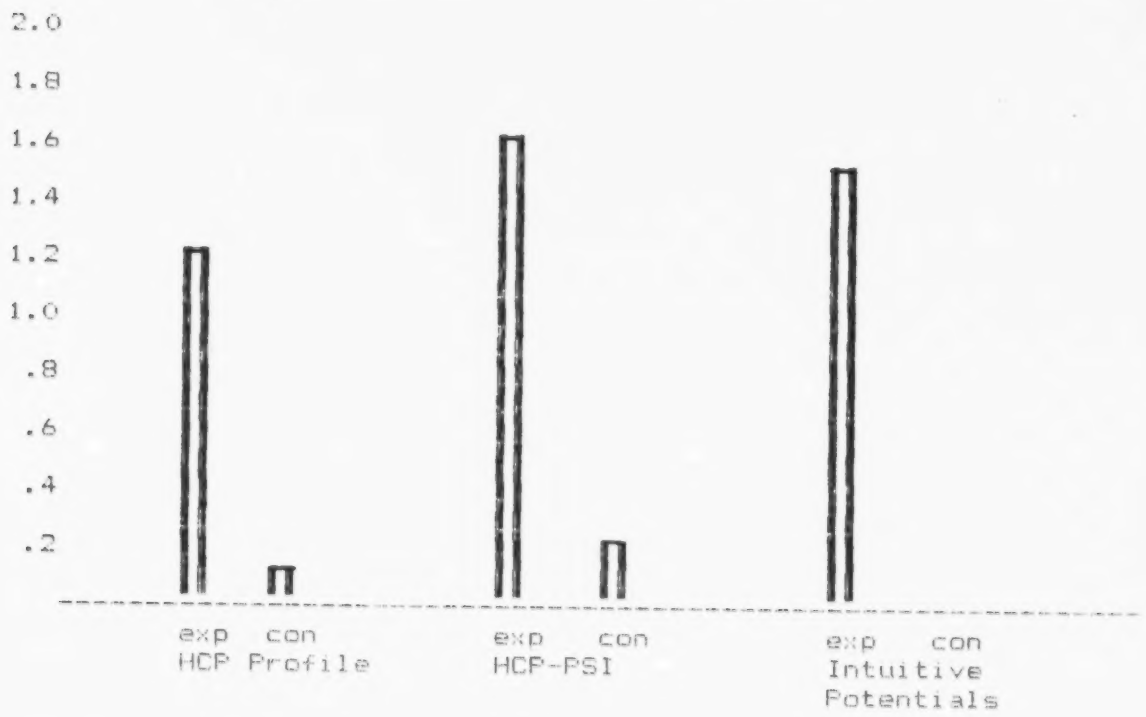


Figure 2

Pre to Posttest Gain Scores for Left- and Right-Brain Oriented Individuals in Experimental and Control Groups

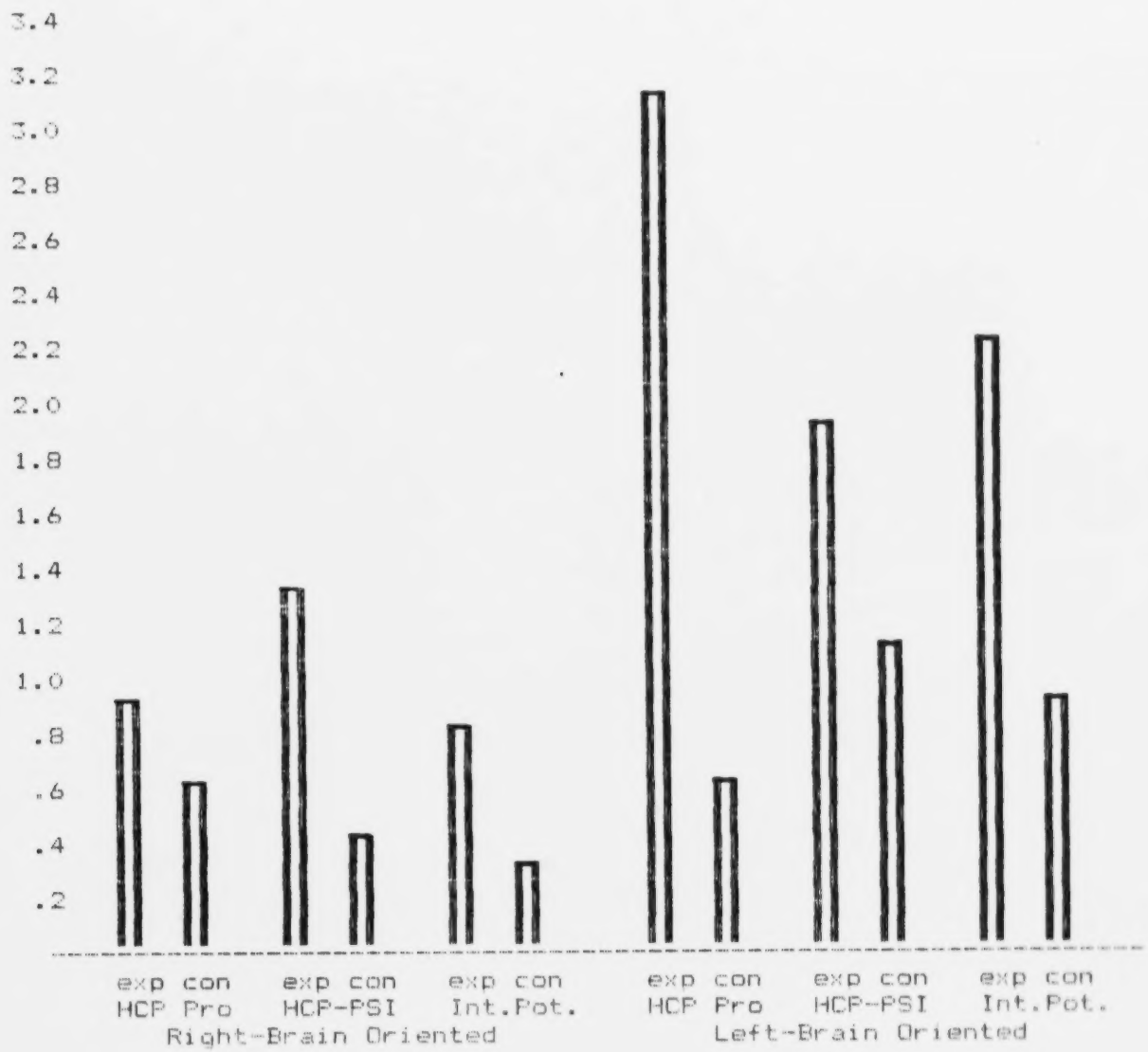
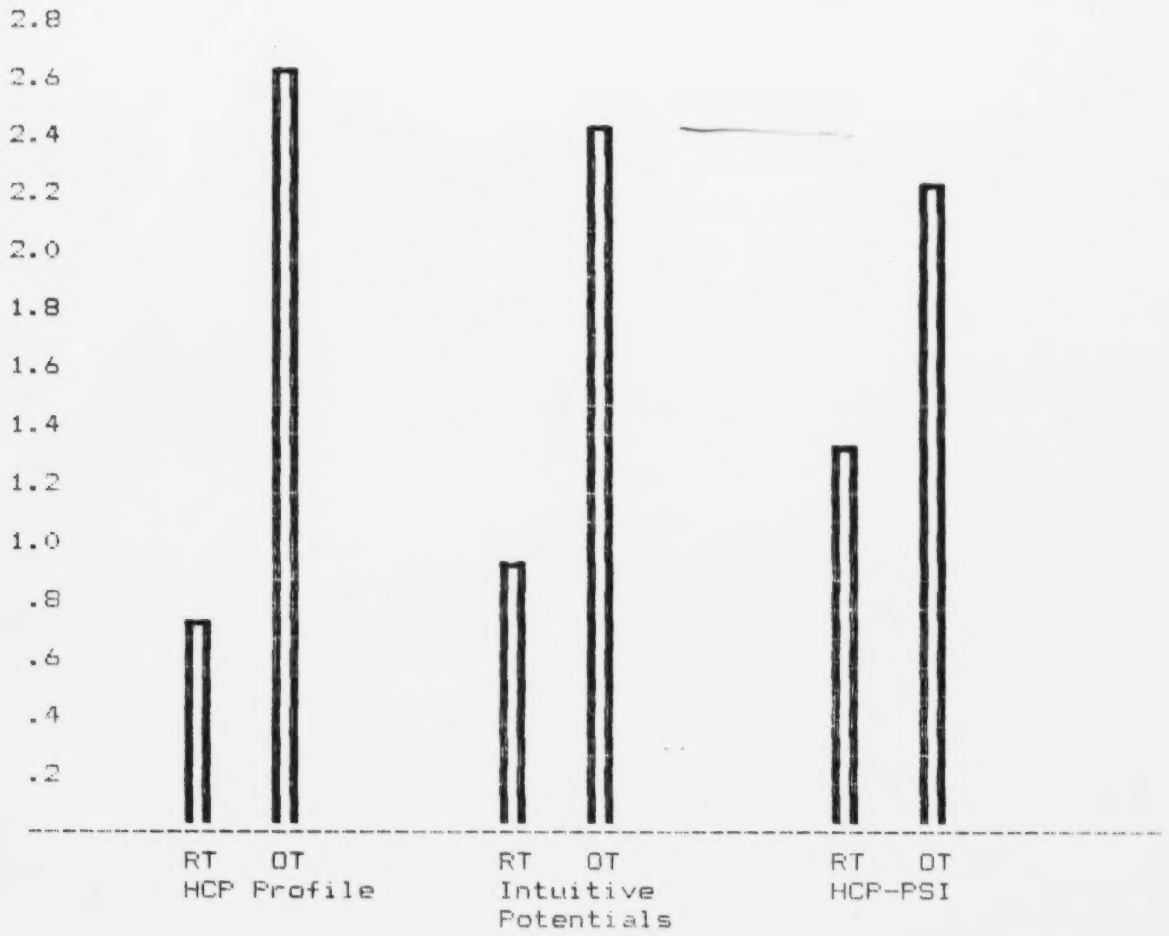


Figure 3

Pre to Posttest Gain Scores for Right-Brain Oriented Individuals and All Others (Balanced and Left-Brain) in Experimental Group



RT denotes right-brain oriented
OT denotes all others (balanced and left-brain oriented